Japanese Knotweed

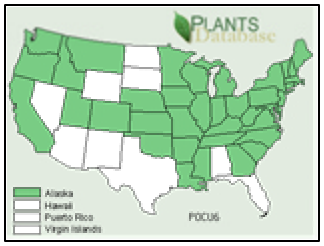
Taxonomic Hierarchy: *Polygonum cuspidatum* Sieb. & Zucc

Kingdom	Plantae – Plants
Subkingdom	Tracheobionta – Vascular plants
Superdivision	Spermatophyta – Seed plants
Division	Magnoliophyta – Flowering plants
Class	Magnoliopsida – Dicotyledons
Subclass	Caryophyllidae –
Order	Polygonales –
Family	Polygonaceae – Buckwheat family
Genus	*Polygonum* L. – knotweed
Species	*Polygonum cuspidatum* Sieb. & Zucc. – Japanese knotweed

NATIVE RANGE: Eastern Asia

DESCRIPTION: Japanese knotweed, a member of the buckwheat family (Polygonaceae), is an upright, shrublike, herbaceous perennial that can grow to over 10 feet in height. As with all members of this family, the base of the stem above each joint is surrounded by a membranous sheath. Stems of Japanese knotweed are smooth, stout and swollen at joints where the leaf meets the stem. Although leaf size may vary, they are normally about 6 inches long by 3 to 4 inches wide, broadly oval to somewhat triangular and pointed at the tip. The minute greenish-white flowers occur in attractive, branched sprays in summer and are followed soon after by small winged fruits. Seeds are triangular, shiny, and very small, about 1/10 inch long.

ECOLOGICAL THREAT: Japanese knotweed spreads quickly to form dense thickets that exclude native vegetation and greatly alter natural ecosystems. It poses a significant threat to riparian areas, where it can survive severe floods and is able to rapidly colonize scoured shores and islands. Once established, populations are extremely persistent.



DISTRIBUTION IN THE UNITED STATES: Distribution includes 36 states in the lower 48 from Maine to Wisconsin south to Louisiana, and scattered midwest and western states. See *Green* map area----->

HABITAT IN THE UNITED STATES: Japanese knotweed can tolerate a variety of adverse conditions including full shade, high temperatures, high salinity, and drought. It is found near water sources, such as along streams and rivers, in low-lying areas, waste places, utility rights-of-way, and around old homesites. It can quickly become an invasive pest in natural areas after escaping from cultivated gardens.

CURRENT MANAGEMENT APPROACHES: Grubbing, cut stem treatment, and herbicide spray treatment to control large populations

References: http://www.nps.gov/plants/alien/ http://plants.usda.gov/